

The Honorable Charles Wiger
Room 205, Minnesota State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Jennifer Loon
449 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senator Wiger and Representative Loon:

As a superintendent, it is my job to provide equitable opportunities for all students, so that they can perform on grade level and are able to be successful in life. That is what democracy is built upon--an educated workforce. Kids are our dreams, our futures. ***Why can't we provide this educated workforce when the state has a surplus?***

What have I seen in my career? I have seen the disparity between the haves and have nots. I see parents who have the financial means to give their children every advantage. I am happy that they are doing so. People who do not have the financial means face barriers for their children. They cannot afford preschool. They cannot get their children to and from preschool. They have trouble, at times, filling out forms to ask for the help. Why shouldn't their children have the same benefits as those children whose parents can afford preschool? ***Why can't we provide this equity when the state has a surplus?***

The state borrowed money from us a few years ago, to prevent fiscal problems statewide. School districts are still recovering from this. My own district just went through painful budget cuts. We need 3% and 3% funding on the formula to recover from that. It is an immediate need. ***Why can't we provide this funding when the state has a surplus?***

But universal pre-K for 4-year-olds will help us with our core mission--educating every single student. Students who cannot be in pre-K as 4 year olds are part of the picture. Our schools are poised to offering this benefit for each student's success. How do we possibly believe that we will close the achievement gap if we do not use this strategy to help to close the achievement gap? Shouldn't we use this as a lever for change that will make the difference in our students' lives, and in turn, our state's future? ***Why can't we provide this strategy to close the achievement gap when the state has a surplus?***

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